

Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting (Emergency Meeting)

Date: June 17, 2020 (4 pm – 5:30 pm)

Room: Online virtual meeting via Zoom (<https://usc.zoom.us/j/92041288328>)

Present (24): Douglas Becker, Jasmine Bryant, Julia Chamberlin, Monalisa Chatterjee, Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch, Jim Clements, David Crombecque, Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus, Gerald “Jerry” Davison, Shannon Gibson, David Ginsburg, Devin Griffiths (*current president*), Yuka Kumagai, Tracie Mayfield, Sri Narayan, Jessica Parr, Stephanie Payne, Michael Petitti, Gioia Polidori (*current vice president/incoming president*), Matthew Pratt, Alisa Sánchez (*incoming secretary*), John Vidale, An-Min Wu (*current secretary*), Emily Zeamer (*incoming vice president*)

Absent (4): Antonio Elefano, Bob Girandola, Joe Palacios, Andrea Parra

Guests (5): Assal Habibi (*Assistant Professor (Research) of Psychology*)
Francesca Italiano (*Professor (Teaching) of Italian*)
Maggie Switek (*Assistant Professor (Practice) of Economics; Chair of DFC Emergency Working Groups on Finance*)
Lorraine Turcotte (*Professor of Biological Science, HEB; Co-Chair of DFC Emergency Working Group on Research*)
Sozan Wali (*Senior Lecturer, Arabic Language*)

Update on USC & Dornsife Budget plans (4:00-4:45)

Devin reported the University in the All-Chairs meetings announced to hold Freshman seminars on campus this fall. **David G.** and **Gioia**, both in a more recent meeting (DSG), corrected the University’s position to ‘strongly solicit’ the seminars instead. **Jessica** expressed the concern of unknown TA situation, and whether offering lab courses is still uncertain.

Gioia said the DUS are asked to submit the teaching modality plan by tomorrow; the Registrar plans to issue the new course schedule on July 3rd, only to update those in person/ hybrid schedule and to avoid from moving all online. Students then have a short window to reenroll in courses. The question is then if it makes sense for the DFC to make a statement or petition on principle about teaching & pedagogy? Majority DFC members said yes. **Douglas** will share the EWG document on teaching principles to all.

Devin reported that the budget plan has been moved a lot over the last 2-3 weeks – Devin has previously shared Provost’s presentation and Dean Miller’s presentations. And now just heard that the plan to furlough will be postponed indefinitely; the retirement benefit cut from January 2021, however, is not on pause. Need to continue working on this.

Update on Emergency Working Groups

Gioia: We organized three Emergency Working Groups (EWG) volunteered by Dornsife faculty members -- on Research, Teaching/Pedagogy, and Finance -- about the concerns under COVID crisis. All Chair/co-chairs of the EWGs were here to provide status report:

- *Update on Research EWG (Co-Chairs: Sri Narayan & Lorraine Turcotte)*

Gioia said that the research survey has been sent out to all staff, faculty, and PhD students on Tuesday (June 16, 2020). So far, we have already received over 240 responses. **Sri** will organize the results. Sri reported that half of the responses were from faculty and about half from other stakeholders. It shows researchers have some serious concerns under current circumstances. A lot of researchers in Humanity are being hurdled by lack of access to libraries and archives (~25%); childcare is another big issue. The digested information will be discussed in EWG and more details will be shared later.

- *Update on Teaching and Pedagogy EWG (Co-Chairs: Douglas Becker & Julia Chamberlin)*

Tracie provided via Chat the Google document about the Principles with underlying questions and concerns the subgroup has on teaching (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YIQO4opCAzfmFMq_jGSZN5HFiDDwHKZEYMKlahNCx9A/edit?ts=5ee96aa4).

Devin mentioned that Dean Stott needs to know additional resources that departments need; we should find out from chairs so they can weigh in and we can help the department needs in the process. **Marianna** said that each department should have the same access to this type of the information. **Gioia** responded that this concern has been raised during the DUS meeting and Dean Stott has been asked to send a Memo to all chairs as well. Emily said she received different information from two DUS; **David G.** said he would share his notes (in the DUS meeting) with all if Dean Stott is okay with it (David G will ask Stott).

Douglas said much of the concerns have been mentioned above; he continued to describe the general consent from the EWG is the unhappiness of what the CET has been offering; CET appears to be more interested in course design instead of course delivery. More collaboration on course delivery is needed. We need the principles on teaching, some highlights include: Teaching excellence, faculty autonomy, and clear guidance and transparency (communication), and safety. Safety is a main concern. David G. shared an article via chat about safety (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/coronavirus-college-safe.html>).

Emily has been working on the resolution.

As to international students. **Julia** mentioned that issues on visa, salary (ie. bring it back to the stipend/fellowship models) and pedagogy support. Devin said the salary issue has been raised in the meeting with Deans Miller and Finkel, and there are some legal issues.

Monalisa suggested to raise the issue and look into labor law – are international students allowed to teach online? **Gioia** responded that Dean Finkel has promised to look into this subject last Thursday; **Gioia** will ask for more clarity tomorrow.

- *Update on Financial Impact EWG (Chair: Maggie Switek)*

Maggie said the current finance EWG has two main committees: One with the responses from 15 department chairs about financial concerns and breaking points, and will submit the concerns to Dornsife Dean's office at the end of this week. General concerns from chairs include 1) faculty development and other accounts, 2) some protection for TAs or fellowships if they cannot graduate due to the hiring issues, 3) staffing (can we find replacement if any staff leave), 4) access to archive and libraries, and 5) funding for PPE etc. There are also concerns on the university level, including merit increase, retirement benefits, salary increase etc. The other committees of Finance EWG works on quantifying the impacts on budget cut being made in Dornsife. Romain Ranciere has reached out to Renee Perez) and Dean Miller for the information; Romain is also a part of COFE. There will be a memo about this in a week or so. **Maggie** concluded that the unit level decision (the first committee above) is more urgent, and believed that our work can make some impacts.

Devin added that the central will pay for PPEs for departments and instructors; we should communicate to faculty that faculty can request the PPE from their departments. **Lorraine** added that it is from our (departmental) budget now until University figures out the system. So far it takes two months and someone need to go pick up. **Maggie** asked where we can get such information. Lorraine responded that she is not sure if the information is ready yet; need permission from Alfonso D'Onofrio. Right now faculty are allowed on campus for research purposes but not for teaching or other purpose. **Lorraine** said she ordered the PPE by herself otherwise the wait time can be an issue. **Devin** gave Alfonso's contact (alfonso.donofrio@usc.edu). As to masks, **Gioia** said Dean Miller has said to provide double-layer cloth masks from Dornsife. **Matthew** said that in Chemistry Department it is not a problem to get PPE.

Update on DEI Learning Communities

Alisa gave the update for DEI Learning Community, which meant to create space and time to develop learning and talking of DEI, particularly on anti-racism on campus. **Alisa** has already connected with Kimberly (Freeman) and created a reading group that connect people who want to learn DEI. We hope this goes on. The first DEI Learning Community reading

group starts this Friday at 2pm over zoom; the book selection is *The New Jim Crow*. During the summer we meet once every other weeks and maybe once a month in the fall. The Learning Community will also have a slack channel so the conversation continues.

Gioia asked if we should reinstate the M designation in the GE courses to fulfill diversity criteria. Previously, Dean Freeman, Devin and Gioia had a meeting with Richard Fliegel to discuss this option. The decision to remove the m designation was made when the GE system was reformed and now it would be very complicated to change the GE system. However, this might be the right time to go back and ask for it – for GE courses or in all courses. **Stephanie** thought that M designation is more superficial than systemic; we need more foundational work to implement DEI into all courses. **Gioia** said that she is happy to talk about more structural changes that we can actively do. **Jim** followed up by saying what we want is not to have more diverse material in the courses but be decisively anti-racism in the coursework (e.g. The same structure should stand when we teach math or English). **Stephanie** agreed by saying that it is not what we teach but how we teach, which **Devin** added that's the changes the DEI Caucus has been leading in the last two years.

Salary Study (4:45-5:15)

Devin started with the work DFC attempted three years ago to figure out how faculty in Dornsife (RTPC and others) were paid and to advocate for changes. Last year, T.J. McCarthy, a Price School labor economist agreed to work with Sergio and others to adapt that methodology to look at six departments as samples. We asked to break into divisions now – the goal is to know whether and where RTPC salary compression exists, which cannot be illustrated by the mean alone (Note: it is difficult to break out the RTPC promoted ranks so they are in one category). From the current analysis, USC pays less than UCLA in general. Some areas have wider gaps than others.

Some member suggested to add in boxplots; with quantile (25% and 75%), we can have a sense on tracks and ranks. **Matthew** suggested violin plots to show the distributions better. **Lorraine** reflected to say that faculty in her department is paid lower than the data shown in the report; and three (out of six) departments are in the Natural Sciences bloc (including Psychology). **Devin** said this is an ongoing measure, and may pick different departments next year, which is particularly important since we are moving from 3 divisions to 4 divisions. **Maggie** suggested the base (i.e. the number of classes RTPC teaches) should be the same. **Assal** indicated that it is not true that research faculty in UCLA do not share the salary; the Research Caucus has that data. A member also indicated that salary is not reflected correctly on how our pay is in the Writing Program and the language departments. **Jessica** thought that lumping promotion ranks with master lecturer and others (those without terminal degrees) skew this approach. **Gioia** raised the question about whether there are different floors on the salary for Master Lecturer and Senior Lecturer. Additionally, **David C.** said that a lot of RTPC faculty at? UCLA have permanent contracts.

Devin said that we can get the analysis refined; what we want is pay equity. **Lorraine** thought what we need is to have a separate salary pool (equity pool) for people who do not have equity pay. Such pool, **Devin** responded, seems already in use for personal level (pay equity); what if the entire department(s) is not getting equity pay? Emily said that salary benchmarking is helpful for departments with those issues. **Sri** suggested to ask for the error bar. Last, **Devin** asked how to distribute the information after the analysis is finalized; it is an important step for transparency in Dornsife but we need to be careful about it, especially with budget cut crisis.

Extra Business

- *Concerns relating to budget crisis*

Jerry talked about his general concerns on budget crisis. The University should be able to deal with earnings from endowment (without touching the endowment fund itself); this is not illegal if we get approval from the donors. This is a critical time and if we go to donors and set the condition and approach properly, with trustees' approval and president presentation, donors should be willing to wave their rights for the money to be redirected. Also, faculty spent their unpaid vacation time or paid in research grant to work in the summer (e.g. in this meeting and taking CET courses).

- *Concern relating to teaching this fall*

Shannon said we should be able to teach online well. DFC should send the principles and advocate for faculty to help students to learn well online. **Emily** agreed and asked how we can advocate for faculty and what strategies we should take? **Sri** thought the confusion now is whether the fall classes will be online or in person; **Maggie** agreed, and said the communication in some departments is lacking.

In the meeting with Provost Zukoski and Dean Miller on May 6, Provost seemed to turn the faculty concerns away by talking about obligations to students. **Tracie** said we know and agree that faculty has obligations, and what we advocate now is for faculty to have both mental and physical health first so that we can teach our students well. **Marianna** said for the Provost's Coffee hour tomorrow, we should demand clarity (maybe not using the big word 'transparency'). Right now we do not know what to prepare for the fall courses.

Devin concluded the meeting by reminding the members for the petition to sign on. In this last DFC 2019-2020 meeting, members thanked Devin for his service to DFC.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Respectfully,

An-Min Wu